City of Seattle
Office of Housing

TO: Councilmember Nick Licata, Chair, Housing, Human Service, Health, & Culture
            Committee

            Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
            Councilmember Sally Clark
            Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

FROM: Rick Hooper, Director

DATE: September 9, 2011

SUBJECT: Office of Housing Presentation on 2011 Race and Social Justice Initiative Work
            Plan

I am looking forward to sharing key Office of Housing Race and Social Justice Work Plan
elements with you at the September 14th Committee meeting. Since we talked about OH Race
and Social Justice Initiatives last summer we have expanded our efforts. Key elements of our
work plan are outlined below. Our work is becoming increasingly critical given a continuing
environment of declining financial resources and growing need for housing assistance. Attached
is our entire 2011 RSJI Work Plan. We want to use our brief time at the Committee meeting to
focus on the following key initiatives:

- **Housing Search Website:** OH has been leading a countywide effort to establish a website
  where landlords can list their available units and renters can identify affordable housing
  available for rent. Five agencies – OH, Seattle Housing Authority, King County Housing
  Authority, King County, and United Way – have come together to fund the service, and
  Seattle Housing Authority has been selected as the contract administrator. This will be a
  free service for both landlords and renters. The bilingual website (English and Spanish) will
  provide real-time information about and links to rental housing that is currently vacant or
  will soon be available, and housing that is accepting applications for a waiting list. There will
  also be a call center that can assist landlords and tenants who may not have access to a
  computer or the necessary computer skills. SHA will contract for translation services for
  non-English speakers who wish to use the call center. The system design phase is now
  underway; roll-out is the first quarter of 2012.

- **Racial Equity Toolkit:** In May, three OH staff participated in SOCR's Racial Equity Toolkit
  training, which illustrates the relationship between racial equity and policy and budget

decisions. The toolkit was subsequently used to evaluate OH's Homebuyer Assistance Program. The primary take-away from this exercise was the vital role of quality data when assessing whether programs are serving racial minority and other vulnerable populations in our community. Inconsistencies in available homebuyer data, combined with the small sample size of loans funded by the program, made it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the impact of OH's Homebuyer Program on racial equity in homeownership. However, based on the data OH does have, it appears that the program is serving a slightly higher percentage of non-white homebuyers compared to the open market.

- **Fair Housing:** OH will be preparing a new Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) to present to City Council as part of the Consolidated Plan update next June. The AI will examine whether residents and potential residents of Seattle have equal access to housing regardless of their race, religion, parental status, sexual orientation or other status as protected under federal, state or local law. We are now working with HSD and OCR to formulate the scope of Seattle's new AI and will have more to share with you when we discuss our OH 2012 Work Program next January.

- **Staff enrichment:** In March, OH's RSJ Change Team and Senior Management participated in a half-day training on "The Politics of Race: Using Power for Institutional Change." In addition to hearing presentations on the topic by SOCR's Julie Nelson and Glenn Harris, OH staff participated in small and large group discussions and activities around the ideas of managing power, organizational politics, formal/informal power, and how OH staff can use power/politics to move RSJI forward. OH's change team will also be hosting a series of brownbag sessions to discuss RSJ-related topics, including books, documentaries, etc. Sahar Fathi, legislative aide to Councilmember Mike O'Brien, will be leading our first brownbag discussion, scheduled for September 22nd. We will be exploring the complications for immigrants in the housing system, in particular the relationship between legal status and eligibility for housing.

- **Who lives in OH funded projects:** OH is in its second year of using the state-wide Web-Based Annual Reporting System (WBARS), which facilitates the collection of demographic data from the hundreds of affordable projects OH has funded around Seattle. We are now beginning to understand better who is actually living in housing units we fund compared to who we think should be living in those units.

Attachment: 2011 OH RSJ Work Plan